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Tot autresi com sueut li lous
Entre les aigneaus fameillos,
Qui destreiz est de jeûner
E qui ne(1) puet plus endurer,
E cui ne chaut qui que le veie,
Quant il vuent acueillir sa preie;
Tot autresi fait Achillès.

(*R. de Troie*, 21089-95, ed. Constans, *Soc. Anc. Textes.*)

This installment of old French similes suggested by the hunt with dog and bird shows how closely language follows upon human pursuits and activities. Few of those quoted above could develop today, for the conditions which gave rise to them have disappeared. Thus a study of popular similes can be seen to have some bearing on the cultural history of society.

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ANOTHER OF POPE'S SCHEMES

Of all men of letters Pope bears the palm as a schemer of schemes. There is hardly a single period of his career that is not marked by some deep laid plot. He seems to have enjoyed taking the circuitous rather than the direct route toward accomplishing his ends. Sometimes he found himself in tight places, owing to his double dealing, and had to scheme his way out; sometimes his devices looked toward exalting himself as a model of virtue; but more frequently his designs were directed toward the persecution of men whom he had, for the most part, gratuitously made his enemies. How well his multifarious conspiracies succeeded and how well he covered up his tracks is clearly seen in the fact that for years after his death he was eulogized as one of the most virtuous of men. It was only in the nineteenth century, when modern scholars began to uncover his tortuous methods and petty tricks, that his reputation began to decline; but it has continued to decline until today even his admirers can hardly speak of his character without apology. One of his schemes is the subject of this contribution.

In his life of Pope, Mr. Courthope states that the third volume of Pope and Swift's *Miscellanies*, which contained the treatise on the *Bathos*, was held back until the *Dunciad* was completed, in order that the treatise might provoke the author's enemies to attack

him and thus furnish some justification for his hurling his thunderbolt. As proof that such was the purpose of the *Bathos*, Mr. Courthope cites Savage's statement that the *Dunciad* was inspired by attacks produced by the treatise. An examination of the four volumes of the *Miscellanies*, 1727-32, reveals further proof.

It is probable that the inception of the *Dunciad* dates back as far as 1720. By 1725 it had assumed some kind of form. In June or July of the next summer Swift, while visiting Pope, rescued the *Dulness*, as it was then called, from the flames. The same summer supplied the author with a hero in the person of Lewis Theobald, who in his *Shakespeare Restored* had revealed Pope's complete lack of editorial ability. In the summer and autumn of the following year the satire reached the form in which it first appeared.

Another result of Swift's visit to Pope was the design of publishing their *Miscellanies*. In October, 1726, Swift was busy collecting all the "small things" that he thought could safely be printed. In February of the next year Pope writes the dean that the *Miscellany* "is now quite printed," and that he is pleased with it. "The third volume," he says, "consists of verses, but I would choose to print none but such as have some peculiarity, and may be distinguished for ours, from other writers."¹

It was not, however, until June that the *Miscellanies* appeared, and then only two volumes consisting of prose. In the preface to the first volume Pope makes plain his plan:

"The papers that compose the first of these volumes were printed about sixteen years ago, to which there are now added, two or three small tracts, and the verses are transferred into a volume apart. The second (and perhaps a third) will consist like this, of several small treatises in prose, wherein a friend or two is concerned."

Evidently Pope's design was to publish three volumes of prose and a last volume of verse, but not having enough material for the third prose volume, he published only the first two. Likewise the volume of verse was withheld, not to await the completion of the *Dunciad*,² but because there were not sufficient poems at hand,

¹ F. E. Ball's edition of Swift's letters, vol. III, p. 380.

² See Elwin and Courthope, vol. v, p. 213. Had Pope wished to withhold a volume in which to publish the *Bathos*, he certainly would have selected

after Pope had culled his material, to make a proper sized book. The next month Swift set about collecting enough material to make good the deficit.³

In the midst of this period of unusual activity, while the volume of poems was being completed and the *Dunciad* was receiving its final touches, Arbuthnot projected his treatise *Περὶ Βάθους*, or the *Art of Sinking in Poetry*. This was an attempt to lay down the rules whereby a poet might fail in verse, and to illustrate these rules by selections from contemporary poetry. Arbuthnot, however, intended the satire to be general and not personal. Pope, seeing the possibilities that lay in the work, appropriated it for his own purposes, that is, to provoke attacks that would justify his retaliating with the *Dunciad*. To make the treatise subserve his end better, he revised it, rendering it much more personal. There was one especially inexcusable chapter, in which he listed the initials of his future victims under the titles of various creatures such as flying-fishes, swallows, ostriches, parrots, didappers, porpoises, frogs, eels, and tortoises. In his hands the work departed entirely from literary criticism and became baldly personal.

When the *Bathos* was completed near the end of the year,⁴ the question of how it was to be published arose. Pope would have been as unjustified in issuing it by itself as in publishing the *Dunciad* without cause. Two prose volumes of the *Miscellanies* had already been published, and there was not sufficient material for a third.⁵ There only remained the volume of verse which was now completed. Yet to include a prose work among the poems would violate his plan for the *Miscellanies*, and Pope disliked giving up any prearranged scheme. But it was necessary to publish the treatise if he did not wish to publish the *Dunciad*

one of prose rather than one of verse, and thus avoided the difficulties into which he later fell. At the time the first two volumes appeared, he probably had no idea of using the *Bathos*.

³ "Pray copy out the verses I writ to Stella on her collecting my verses, and send them to me, for we want to make our poetical Miscellany large enough, and I am not there to pick what should be added." Swift to Rev. Thomas Sheridan, July 1, 1727. Ball, vol. III, p. 403.

⁴ The *Bathos* contains strictures on *Double Falshood* which was first produced Dec. 5, 1727.

⁵ In the "third" volume, 1732, Pope says it contains pieces written since the appearance of the other volumes of the *Miscellanies*.

unprovoked, and Swift was clamoring for the printing of the great satire.

Finally Pope decided to remove enough poems from the first of the poetical volume, as yet unprinted, to admit the insertion of the provocative piece. But since most of the verses to be removed were Swift's, he had to make some excuse to him. Rather than frankly telling the dean his purpose, he pretended that he rejected the verses as unfit,⁶ stating at the same time that he was substituting a production of his own. Swift acquiesced but with injured feelings.

In January, 1728, Pope wrote to Swift that the third volume was coming out, and that it contained the *Bathos* which he had rewritten. It did not appear, however, until March, though bearing the date 1727. On the title page the volume is called the "last" instead of the third. The reason for this peculiarity is evident. As mentioned before, Pope's plan was to publish three volumes of prose and one of verse. Had the volumes been numbered in chronological order, the first two would have been prose, the next verse, and the fourth prose again. Such an arrangement would naturally have been obnoxious to Pope. To avoid the difficulty caused by the volume of verse appearing when it did, he called it the "last," so that it could be considered the last of the series, even though he might later publish another volume of prose.

There is also another peculiarity of the volume. The first ninety-five pages consist of the *Bathos*. Then appears a complete and separate title page: *Miscellanies in Verse. London: Printed for Benjamin Motte, at the Middle Temple Gate in Fleet-street. MDCCXXVII.* After this comes the verse. It seems clear that Pope,

⁶Swift writing to Motte, Dec. 18, 1727, says, "As to the poetical volume of Miscellany, I believe, five parts in six, at least, are mine. Our two friends (Gay and Pope) you know, have printed their works already, and we could expect nothing but slight loose papers. There is all the poetry I ever writ worth printing. Mr. Pope rejected some I sent him, for I desired him to be as severe as possible, and I will take his judgement. He writ to me, that he intended a pleasant discourse on the subject of poetry should be printed before the volume, and says that discourse is ready." Unfortunately there is a lacuna, followed by the words "not have let me suffer for my modesty, when I expected he could have done better. Others are more prudent and cannot be blamed." Swift evidently felt that Pope inserted the *Bathos*, because he considered it superior to Swift's verses. See Ball, vol. III, p. 440.

when he inserted the *Bathos*, perceived the impropriety of putting it with the poems, and separated it as much as possible from the rest of the volume, anticipating a time when he might remove it to more proper surroundings.

This malicious essay did not succeed in provoking many attacks, only a score of small things. Yet two months later, when the *Dunciad* appeared, the preface claimed in justification that for the preceding two months London had been full of pamphlets, advertisements, letters, and the like against the wit and character of Mr. Pope. We can read in this gross exaggeration of the effect of the *Bathos* the purpose of the *Bathos*.

Early in the summer of 1732 Pope set about collecting enough material to complete the third volume of prose miscellanies. Toward this end he asked Swift for contributions, which request the latter granted, though he was far from being convinced that the volume should be published, for he knew that it would contain, for the most part, the works of other writers than Swift and Pope.⁷ But Pope persisted, for he felt compelled to get the *Bathos* out of the volume of verse.

When the last volume, last in order of time, made its appearance, the title page proclaimed it the "third," so that it could be placed after the first two volumes of prose but before the volume of verses which had appeared before it and yet had been called the "last." The first hundred pages consist entirely of verses, after which comes a separate and complete title page: *Miscellanies. The Third Volume. London: Printed for Ben. Motte and Lawton Gilliver in Fleet-street. 1732.* The prose tracts separately paginated follow. Thus we see that the verses, as was the case with the *Bathos*, are here placed first and followed by a title page, and that they occupy practically the same amount of space as the *Bathos*. Furthermore, Pope in order to correct the illogical combination of prose and verse, tells us in the advertisement to the last ("third") volume:

"Of the following volume we need only say that it contains the remainder of those miscellaneous pieces, which were in some sort promised in the preface to the former volumes, or which have been written since. The verses are paged separately that they may be added to that volume which wholly consists of verse, and the Treatise of the *Bathos* placed in their stead in this."

⁷ Cf. Ball, vol. iv, pp. 307, 359.

The treatise, having served its purpose, is to be restored to its proper place, though we are left in doubt how the transfer is to be accomplished.

When Swift received a copy of this issue, he was very displeased. He noticed that six sevenths or, as he later says, seven eights of the verse was his, and was incorrect besides, and that the greater part of the prose belonged to others.⁸ He again expressed disapproval of the whole affair, saying that the volume should never have been published. Against his will he sent what he termed a "certificate" acknowledging his consent to publication. The next year Charles Ford, writing to Swift, expressed his resentment against the way in which the latter's works had been treated by Pope in the *Miscellanies*:

"I have long had it at heart to see your works collected and published with care. It is become absolutely necessary since that jumble with Pope etc. in three volumes which put me in a rage whenever I meet them."⁹

In conclusion, Pope wished to use the *Bathos* to provoke attacks which would seem to justify the publication of the *Dunciad*. The only feasible plan was to remove from the poetical volume of the *Miscellanies* enough verses to permit the insertion of the treatise. Such a plan called for the publication of the volume before the third prose volume, as well as making necessary the mixing of verse and prose. This disarrangement Pope attempted to correct, after the *Bathos* had served its purpose, by calling the poetic miscellany the "last" volume and the fourth chronologically the "third" volume, and by putting separate title pages respectively after the treatise and the hundred pages of verse, so that an exchange could be effected, and everything reduced to proper order.

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⁸ Cf. Ball, vol. iv, pp. 359, 367.

⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. v, p. 37.